

Bulbinella rossii

COMMON NAMES

Ross's lily

BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: CD, PD, RR

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dioecious, stout, perennial lily up to 1 m tall and 40 mm diameter at the base. **Leaves** fleshy, 0.6–1m x 15–60 mm wide, dark green, obtuse to subacute, apices recurved, nerves faint to prominent, easily felt when fresh. **Peduncle** up to 10 mm diameter, usually < leaf length.

Inflorescence a cylindrical raceme up to 150 × 600 mm; bracts and pedicels of almost equal length in female flowers and conspicuous in bud; in males < pedicels and inconspicuous in bud; pedicels 10–20 mm long, swollen just below flower. **Flowers** numerous, densely crowded, 10–14 mm diameter, golden yellow to sulphur yellow, often faintly tinged with orange; tepals oblong-ovate, spreading in males in females erect and remaining so, usually hardening as fruit ripens. **Stamens** < tepals; anthers in males conspicuously filled with pollen, in females rudimentary. **Ovary** 2 mm long, broad right to base. **Capsule** 10 mm long, broadly ovoid, gynophore absent. **Seeds** 4–6 mm long, dark brown to black, narrowly winged.

SIMILAR TAXA

None. This is the only species of *Bulbinella* Kunth present on the subantarctic islands. *Bulbinella rossii* is perhaps closest to *B. gibbsii* Cockayne, from which it differs by its greater stature, leaves up to 60 mm wide, cylindrical rather than conical racemes held on a stout rather than slender axis which is obscured by the densely crowded flowers and fruits rather than more or less visible. *Bulbinella rossii* has a distinctly capitate rather than scarcely capitate stigma.

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: Auckland Islands and Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku.

HABITAT

Widespread and common from sea level to the tops of island ranges. Flourishes in disturbed sites, and so common near old habitations and because it is not especially palatable, where browsing animals congregate. prefers open herbfield and tussock grassland, where it may form dense colonies.

THREATS

No apparent threats. Listed because it occupies a small geographic area.

GENUS

Bulbinella



Sub Antarctic Islands. Photographer: Chris Rance, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Campbell Island. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

FAMILY

Asphodelaceae

AUTHORITY

Bulbinella rossii (Hook.f.) Cheeseman

SYNONYMS

Chrysobactron rossii Hook.f.; *Anthericum rossii* (Hook.f.) Hook.f.

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

October–January

FRUITING

December–March

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Winged seeds are dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild. It has been cultivated with limited success in the more southerly parts of New Zealand.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).

ETYMOLOGY

bulbinella: Little bulb

rossii: Named for William Ross, a botanical collector; or Capt. James Ross, leader of an arctic expedition; or others named Ross, depending on genus

NVS CODE

BULROS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 14

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified by Peter de Lange from Moore and Edgar (1970)

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NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/bulbinella-rossii/>

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